10 Art as insurrection: the question of aesthetics in Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche

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> Artists; those savage beasts that can't get enough of too much. (Land)

Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* is the site where art irrupts into European philosophy with the force of trauma. The ferocious impetus of this irruption was only possible in an epoch attempting to rationalize itself as permanent metamorphosis, as growth. Which means that it is a trauma quite incommensurable with the sort of *difficulties* art has posed to western philosophy since Plato, for it is no longer a matter of irritation, but of catastrophe. Our own.

The consistency of Kant's critical philosophy throughout all three of the great *Critiques* rests in the attention to excess inherent in the conception of synthetic a priori judgements. The very inception of the critical project lay in Kant's decisive response to the voiding of logical metaphysics—the disintegration of the philosophical endeavour to reduce synthesis—that was consummated by Hume. Perhaps nothing was clearer to Kant than the radical untenability of the Leibnizian paradigm of metaphysics, still dominant in the (Wolfian) philosophy of the Prussian state. Logicism had been exposed, by the sceptical and empirical thought of a more advanced social system, as a sterile tautological stammering that belonged to the Middle Ages when positivity had been given in advance. It was with extraordinary resolve that Kant jettisoned the deductive systematization that had characterized the philosophies of immobilist societies—philosophies deeply and deliberately rooted in stagnant theism—and replaced it with the metaphysics of excess. He was even prepared to assist in the razing of all theoretical theology; because philosophy, too, had to become (at least a little) revolutionary. Nothing substantial was any longer to be presupposed.

Although the hazards of synthesis—of having to think—were clearly no longer eliminable, Kant still clung to the prospect that they could be traversed and definitively concluded. Philosophy would have to *take some ground,* but it could still anticipate a place of rest; an impregnable defensive line. If history could no longer be avoided, at least it could be brought swiftly and meticulously to its end. Time would have to be transcendentally determined, once and for all, by a new metaphysics. It would thenceforth just continue, without disruption, in an innocent confirmation of itself. For a while —a period some time between the early 1770s and 1790—it is possible that Kant was as cheerful as any bourgeois philosopher has ever been. An ephemeral restabilization had been achieved. Then came disaster. Something was still shockingly out of control. A third *Critique* was necessary.

The terrifying insight that drove Kant into the labyrinthine labours of the *Critique of Judgement* was that utter chaos had still not been outlawed by an understanding whose pretension was to 'legislate for nature'. Kant's own words are these:

> although this [the pure understanding] makes up a system according to transcendental laws, which contain the condition of possibility for experience as such, it would still be possible that there be an infinite multiplicity of empirical laws and such a great heterogeneity of natural forms belonging to the particular experience that the concept of a system according to these (empirical) laws must be totally alien to the understanding, and neither the possibility, even less the necessity of such a totality could be conceived.[1]

There are few horrors comparable to that of the master legislator who realizes that *anarchy is still permitted*. Far from having been domesticated by the transcendental forms of understanding, nature was still a freely flowing wound that needed to be staunched. This was going to be far more messy and frightening than anything yet undertaken, but Kant gritted his yellowing teeth, and began.

He found the resource for his new and final campaign in the precarious negative disorder which he called 'beauty'. When compared to the rigorous order of transcendental form, beauty was an altogether fragile and impermanent discipline. It was something the transcendental subject could not promise itself. Nevertheless, it seemed that something beyond reason, something that was prepared to get its hands dirty, was keeping nature down. 'Purposiveness without purpose', Kant's last

name for excess, has all the extravagance of triumph. Even without trying, we win. History is written by the victors and ascendancy is presupposed as the condition of presentation, so that the submission of nature to exorbitant law is given with the objectivity of experience:

> It is thus a subjectively necessary transcendental presupposition that unlimited dissimilarity of empirical laws and heterogeneity of natural forms does not arise, but that it rather, through the affinity of the particular laws under more general ones, qualifies as an experience, as an empirical system.[2]

> All those martialled formulas: nature takes the shortest way—she does nothing in vain—there is no leap in the multiplicity of forms *(continuum formarum)*—she is rich in species, but yet thrifty in genuses, and so forth, are nothing other than just this transcendental expression of judgement, setting itself a principle for experience as a system and thus for its own needs.[3]

Experience is thought of in terms of an extravagant but explosive inheritance; an ungrounded adaptation of nature to the faculties of representation. The increasingly tortured and paradoxical formulations that Kant selects indicate the precarious character of the luxuriance (stocked and expended in the imagination as 'free-play'). Consider just one example: 'Purposiveness is a lawfulness of the accidental as such.'[4]

Like Marx's Ricardo, it is the extraordinary cynicism of Kantianism at the edge of its desperation that lends it a profound radicality. Kant's 'reason' is a reactive concept, negatively defined against the pathology with which it has been locked in perpetual and brutal war. In the third *Critique* all inhibition is lifted from this conflict; it becomes gritty, remorseless, cruel. His theory of the sublime, for instance, is sheer exultation in an insensate violence *(Gewalt)* against the pre-conceptual (animal) powers summarized under the faculty of the 'imagination'. In the experience of the sublime nature is affirmed as the trigger for a 'negative-pleasure', in so far as it humiliates and ruins that part of ourselves that we fail to share with the angels. To take one instance (out of innumerable possibilities) he says of the sublime that it is:

> something terrifying for sensibility…which for all that, has an attraction for us, arising from the fact of its being a violence which reason unleashes upon sensibility with a view to extending its own domain (the practical) and letting sensibility look out beyond itself into the infinite, which is an abyss for it.[5]

Kant is becoming remarkably indiscriminate about his allies, asking only that they be enemies of pathological inclination *(Neigung),* and know how to fight. If reason is so secure, legitimate, supersensibly guaranteed, why all the guns?

Irrational surplus, or the ineliminable and beautiful *danger* of unconscious creative energy: nature with fangs. How do we hold on to this thought? It is perpetually threatened by collapse; by a reversion to a depressive philosophy of work, whether theological or humanistic. The three great strands of post-Kantian exploration—marked by the names Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer—are constantly tempted by the prospect of a reduction to forgotten or implicit labour; to the agency of God, spirit, or man, to anything that would return this ruthless artistic force of the generative unconscious to design, intention, project, teleology, Kant's word 'genius' is the immensely difficult and confused but emphatic resistance to such reductions; the thought of an utterly impersonal creativity that is historically registered as the radical discontinuity of the example, of irresponsible legislation, as 'order' without anyone giving the orders.

Kant is quite explicit that a generative theory of art requires a philosophy of genius—a re-admission of accursed pathology into its very heart—and one only has to read the second *Critique* alongside the third to notice the immense disruption that art inflicts upon transcendental philosophy. Kant only manages to control this disruption by maintaining art as an implicitly marginal problematic within a field mastered by philosophy. Even though he acknowledges that the autonomy of reason is to the heteronomy of genius what fidelity of representation is when compared to creation— poverty and wretchedness—the message scarcely seeps out. In addition, there is a perpetual and pathetic effort to subsume aesthetics under practical imperatives, 'beauty as the symbol of ethical life'[6] being one example, and the basic tendency of his theory of the sublime (the infinite privilege of transcendental ideas in comparison to nature) being another.

Despite superficial appearances it is not with the thought of noumenal subjectivity that the unconscious is announced within western philosophy, for this thought is still recuperable as a pre-reflexive consciousness, so innocuous that even Sartre is happy to accept it. It is rather out of an intertwining of two quite different strands of the Kantian text that the perturbing figure of the energetic unconscious emerges: first, the heteronomous pathological inclination whose repression is presupposed in the exercise of practical reason,

and second, genius, or nature in its 'legislative' aspect. The genius 'cannot indicate how this fantastic and yet thoughtful ideas arise and come together in his head, because he himself does not know, and cannot, therefore, teach it to anyone'.[7]

It is no doubt comforting to speak of 'the genius' as if impersonal creative energy were commensurable with the order of autonomous individuality governed by reason, but such chatter is, in the end, absurd. Genius is nothing like a character trait, it does not belong to a psychological lexicon; far more appropriate is the language of seismic upheaval, inundation, disease, the onslaught of raw energy from without. One 'is' a genius only in the sense that one 'is' a syphilitic, in the sense that 'one' is violently problematized by a ferocious exteriority. One returns to the subject of which genius has been predicated to find it charred and devastated beyond recognition.

II

Schopenhauer reconstructed the critical philosophy in several very basic ways: by eliminating the dogmatic presupposition of a difference between subjective and objective noumena; by shifting, not in an idealist (phenomenological) direction, but towards unconscious will; by simplifying the transcendental understanding from the twelve categories and two forms of sensibility inherited from Kant to the integrated 'principle of sufficient reason'; by nipping Kant's proto-idealist logicism in the bud; by charging the critical philosophy with the furious energy of sexual torment, attacking its (at least) germinal academicism, and immeasurably improving its stylistic resources. Where Kant distorts, marginalizes, and obscures the thought of the unconscious, Schopenhauer emphasizes and develops it. He defies the pretensions of imperalistic idealism by describing reason as a derivative abstraction from the understanding, co-extensive with language, so that Kant's transcendental logic is rethought through a transcendental aesthetic organized in terms of the 'principle of sufficient reason', simplified, de-mystified, and pushed downwards towards pre-intellectual intuition. Reason is no longer thought of as an autonomous principle in reciprocal antagonism with nature, but as a film upon its surface. All these moves involve a massive shift in the term 'will' *(Wille),* the placeholder for the psychoanalytical comprehension of desire.

For Kant, the will is aligned with reason, as the principle of the investment of nature with intentional intelligibility, the resource from

which teleological judgement must regulatively metaphorize all exorbitant natural order:

> The will, as the faculty of desire, is one of the many natural causes in the world, namely, that one which is effective through concepts, and everything that is represented as possible (or necessary) through a will is called practically possible (or necessary), in contradistinction from the physical possibility or necessity of an affect for which the ground is not determined in its causality through concepts (but rather, as with lifeless matter, through mechanism, and, with animals, through instinct).[8]

In contrast, Schopenhauer's great discovery is that of non-agentic will; the positivity of the death of God. Rather than thinking willing as the movement by which conceptually articulate decision is realized in nature, he understands the appearance of rational decisions as a derivative consequence of pre-intellectual—and ultimately pre-personal, even pre-organic—willing. Unconscious desire is not just desire that happens to be unconscious, as if a decisionistic lucidity is somehow natural or proper to desire, it is rather that consciousness can only be consequential upon a desire for which lucid thought is an instrumental requirement. For Schopenhauer the intellect is constituted by willing, rather than being constitutive for it. *We do not know what we want.*

There is an important sense in which Schopenhauer's will is the thought of genius taken towards its limit, subsuming the entire faculty of knowledge under that of exorbitant natural order, as a mere instance (although a privileged one) of purposiveness without purpose. But Schopenhauer's own usage of the thought of genius preserves it in its specificity, as a proportional exorbitance on the part of the intellect in relation to the will. Genius is the result of a positive overcoming of unconscious 'purpose', an excess of intellectual energy over that which can be absorbed by desire, thus redundancy, or dysfunction through superfluity:

> an entirely pure and objective picture of things is not reached in the normal mind, because its power of perception at once becomes tired and inactive, as soon as this is not spurred on and set in motion by the will. For it has not enough energy to apprehend the world purely objectively from its own elasticity and *without a purpose*. On the other hand, where this happens, where the brain's power of forming representations has such a surplus that a pure, distinct, objective picture of the external world

> exhibits itself *without a purpose* as something useless for the intentions of the will, which is even disturbing in the higher degrees, and can even become injurious to them—then there already exists at least the natural disposition for that abnormality. This is denoted by the name of *genius,* which indicates that something foreign to the will, i.e., to the I or ego proper, a *genius* added from outside so to speak, seems to become active here.[9]

> The mother of the useful arts is necessity; that of the fine arts superfluity and abundance. As their father, the former have understanding, the latter genius, which in itself a kind of superfluity, that of the power of knowledge beyond the measure required for the service of the will.[10]

For Schopenhauer the body is the objectification of the will, the intellect is a function of a particular organ of the body, and genius is the surplus of that functioning in relation to the individual organism in question. Genius is thus an assault on the individualized will that erupts from out of the reservoir of archaic pre-organized willing. It is a site of particular tension in his thinking, caught between a vision of progressive redemption, achieved through humanity as perfected individuality in which the will is able to renounce itself, and regressive unleashing of the pre-individual will from the torture chamber of organic specificity, ego-interests, and personality. Schopenhauer's attachment to the first of these options is well known, but the possibility of an alternative escape from individualization—by way of dissolution into archaic inundating desire —constantly strains for utterance within his text.

This tension generates a terminological fission that can be easily detected along the jagged fault lines separating sexuality from art. One example is 'beauty'; a word that is driven by Schopenhauer's overt (metaphysical) policy into an uneasy alignment with renunciation. He interprets it as the negative affect—relief or release— associated with disengagement from interested thought, attained through contemplative submergence in the pure universal 'ideas' of natural species as they exist outside space, time, and causality, and manifest to a radicalized Kantian disinterestedness that is greatly facilitated by artistic representation.[11]

If in the end Derrida's *Spurs* is an absurd book, it is because it is tapping into Nietzsche's negotation with Schopenhauer's discourse on woman and the aesthetic without knowing what it is listening to, because it is too busy perpetuating the Heideggerian

mutilation of libidinal post-Kantianism. Nietzsche's recovery and affirmation of the fictive power of art (in his later writings) is a response to the violent denigration of this power in Schopenhauer's thought, a denigration that is programmed by a complex of interlocking factors that are evidenced with particular intensity in his discussion of sexual difference. Schopenhauer founds the modern thought of excitement as suffering, a thought which survives into the twentieth century in a variety of guises, and most importantly in Freud's libidinal economy. In order to perpetuate a rhythm of desire and its tranquillization, in which there is no space for positive pleasure, but only variable degrees of pain, it is necessary to be profoundly *misled*. This is why Schopenhauer refers to the principle of sufficient reason, which is associated with the pure form of material reality, and is the transcendental condition of individuated appearance, as the veil of *Maya,* or illusion. Art, as the escape from individuation and desire, is thus the very negative of fiction. Beauty is an experience of truth.

But there is also another troubling, enticing, arousing, and captivating type of beauty (Nietzsche will come to say it is the only one), the beauty that is exemplified—in post-Hellenic western history at least—in the female body. For Schopenhauer this is an immense problem, as is the domain of the erotic in its entirety. The anegoic disinterestedness of resignation is echoed and parodied by an indifference to ego-interests that leads in a quite opposite direction; *deeper into the inferno of willing*. After acknowledging with his usual raw honesty that 'all amorousness is rooted in the sexual impulse alone',[12] Schopenhauer is forced to accept that 'it is precisely this not seeking *one's own* interest, everywhere the stamp of greatness, which gives even to passionate love a touch of the sublime, and makes it a worthy subject of poetry'.[13]

There is thus both a renunciatory and a libidinous sublime, each with its associated objects and aesthetic 'perfections' or intensities. And it is not only beauty that is torn in separate directions, fiction too is split; on the one hand as the condition of individualization, and on the other as an appeal to constituted individuality. Either the ego is a dream of desire, or desire has to creep up on the ego as a dream. In sexuality,

> nature can attain her end only by implanting in the individual a certain *delusion,* and by virtue of this, that which in truth is merely a good thing for the species seems to him to be a good thing for himself, so that he serves the species, whereas he is

> under the delusion that he is serving himself. In this process a mere chimera, which vanishes immediately afterwards, floats before him, and, as motive, takes the place of a reality. This *delusion is instinct*. In the great majority of cases, instinct is to be regarded as the sense of the *species* which presents to the will what is useful to *it*.[4]

Woman is matter, formless and unpresentable, arousing and thus tormenting; everything about her is pretence, deception, alteration, unrealizable irrational attraction, *Verstellung*. Schopenhauer's notorious essay *On Woman* is mapped by the movement of this word, as it organizes the play of seduction, of indirect action, of non-ideal beauty, disrupting the seriousness and responsible self-legislation of the male subject through an 'art of dissimulation'.[15] Woman is wicked art, art that intensifies life, art whose only truth is a whispered intimation that negation, too, is only a dream, the figment of an overflowing positivity that deceives through excess. Could the dream of redemption be nothing but a bangle upon the arms of exuberant life? Schopenhauer reels in horror:

> Only the male intellect, clouded by the sexual impulse, could call the undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged sex the fair sex; for in this impulse is to be found its whole beauty. The female sex could be more aptly called the *unaesthetic*.[16]

Women are so terribly non-Platonic, so outrageously vital and real, so excessive in relation to the cold sterile perfections of the ideas. With infallible instinctive power they propagate the dangerous delusion that there is something about life that we want. Pessimism has to be misogyny, because woman refuses to repel.

III

A few of the things that Nietzsche learnt—at least in part—from Schopenhauer were the elementary tenets of libidinal materialism or the philosophy of the energetic unconscious (the unrestricted development of the theory of genius), the primacy of the body and its medical condition, pragmatism (asking not how we know but why we know), effervescent literary brilliance, aestheticism (with a musical focus), an 'aristocratic' concern for hierarchy and gradation (which he turned into an implement for overcoming Aristotelian logic), antihumanism, a construction of the history of philosophy as

dominated by Plato and Kant and the problematic of reality and appearance, virulent anti-academicism, misogyny, and the distrust of mathematical thinking. Schopenhauer even wrote that:

> The genuine symbol of nature is universally and everywhere the circle, because it is the schema or form of recurrence; in fact, this is the most general form in nature. She carries it through in everything from the course of the constellations down to the death and birth of organic beings. In this way alone, in the restless stream of time and its content, a continued existence, i.e., a nature, becomes possible.[17]

But the shifts Nietzsche had brought to the Schopenhauerian philosophy by the end of his creative life were at least as immense as this inheritance, involving, amongst other elements, a displacement from the will to life to the will to power, so that survival is thought of as a tool or resource for creation, a displacement of antihumanism from the ascetic ideal to overman (non-terminal overcoming), the completion of a post-Aristotelian 'logic' of gradation without negativity or limits, a 'critique of philosophy' that diagnosed Plato and Kant as symptoms of libidinal disaster, a return of historical thinking freed from the untenable time/timelessness opposition of bankrupt logicism, and a displacement from the principle of sufficient reason to 'equalization' *(Ausgleichung),* which —since differentiation was no longer thought of as an imposition of the subject—implied a shift from primordial unity to irreducible pluralism, and from the disinterested 'world-eye' to perspectivism.

Nietzsche's intricate, profound, and explosive response to the provocation of Schopenhauer resists hasty summarization. It is helpful to start with the transitional movements of *The Birth of Tragedy,* in which the Schopenhauerian will is re-baptized as 'Dionysus'. Like the undifferentiated will, it is only in the dream of Apollonian appearance that Dionysus can be individualized. As Walter Otto remarks (about the mythological, not just the specifically Nietzschean god): 'He is clearly thought of on the oriental pattern as the divine or infinite in general, in which the individual soul longs so much to lose itself' (p. 115). The tragic chorus is the focus of a delirious fusion, in which the personality is liquidated by the collective artistic process. Otto says some other very important things about Dionysus, the twice born:

> The one so born is not merely the exultant one and joy-bringer, he is also the suffering and dying god, the god of tragic

> contradiction. And the inner power of this dual nature is so great, that he steps amongst humanity as a storm, quaking them and subduing their resistance with the whip of madness. Everything habitual and ordered must be scattered. Existence suddenly becomes an intoxication—an introduction of blessedness, but no less one of terror.[18]
>
> To this female world the Apollonian stands opposed, as the decidedly masculine. The mystery of life of blood and of terrestrial force does not rule in it, but rather clarity and breadth of spirit. But the Apollonian world cannot persist without the other.[19]

Doric civilization, the hard Apollonian spine of western culture, vaunting the defiant erectness of its architecture, is fundamentally defensive in nature. Already in this, Nietzsche's most 'Schopenhauerian' book, the minor register of the pessimistic quandary prevails without compromise; the overcoming of wretched individuality is to be referred in the direction of the reservoir of insurgent desire, not in that of a metaphysical renunciation. One does not build fortifications against saints:

> to me the *Doric* state and Doric art are explicable only as a permanent military encampment of the Apollonian. Only incessant resistance to the titanic-barbaric nature of the Dionysian could account for the long survival of an art so defiantly prim and so encompassed with bulwarks, a training so warlike and rigorous, and a political structure so cruel and relentless.[20]

The difference between Dionysus and Apollo is that between music and the plastic arts (Schopenhauer's differentiation that Nietzsche describes as 'the most important insight of aesthetics'[21]), will and representation (primary and secondary process), chaos and form. In the tragic fusion of music and theatrical spectacle desire is delivered upon the order of representation in a delirious collective affirmation of insurgent alterity (nature, impulse, oracular insight, woman, barbarism, Asia). Greek tragedy is the last instance of the occident being radically permeable to its outside. The Socratic death of tragedy is the beginning of the ethnic solipsism and imperialistic dogmatism that has characterized western politics ever since, the brutal domestication process with which the repressive instance in *man* ('reason') has afflicted the impersonal insurrectionary energies of creativity, until they became the whimpering, sentimental, and

psychologized 'genius' of the romantics. With Socrates began the passionate quest of European humanity to become the *ugly animal*.

In his later, more fragmentary writings on art, Nietzsche perhaps says something a little like the following. The aesthetic *operation* is simplification; the movement of abstraction, logicization, unification, the resolution of problematic. It is this operation which, when understood in terms of the logical principles formulated by Aristotle —in terms, that is, of its own product—seems like a negation of the enigmatic, the re-distribution of alterity to the same within a zero-sum exchange, the progressive 'improvement' and domestication of life. But simplification is not a teleologically regulated approximation to simplicity, to the decadent terminus we call 'truth', it is an inexhaustibly open-ended creative process whose only limits are fictions fabricated out of itself. Nothing is more complex than simplification; what art takes from enigma it more than replenishes in the instantiation of itself, in the labyrinthine puzzle it plants in history. The intensification of enigma. The luxuriantly problematic loam of existence is built out of the sedimented aeons of residues deposited by the will to power, the impulse to create, 'The world as a work of art that gives birth to itself'.[22]

Enigma, positive confusion (delirium), problematic, pain, whatever we want to call it; the torment of the philosophers in any case, is the stimulus to ecstatic creation, to an interminable 'resolution' into the enhanced provocations of art. What the philosophers have never understood is this: *it is the unintelligibility of the world alone that gives it worth*. 'Inertia needs unity (monism); plurality of interpretations a sign of strength. Not to desire to deprive the world of its disturbing and enigmatic character'.[23] Not, then, to oppose pain to the absence of pain as metaphysical pessimism does, but, rather, to differentiate the ecstatic overcoming of pain from weariness and inertia, to exult in new and more terrible agonies, fears, burning perplexities as the resourse of becoming, overcoming, triumph, the great libidinal oscillations that break up stabilized systems and intoxicate on intensity; that is Dionysian pessimism— 'refusal to be deprived of the stimulus of the enigmatic'[24]; 'the effect of the work of art is to *excite the state that creates art— intoxication*'.[25]

IV

After Nietzsche there is Freud, tapping into a reservoir of genius (the unconscious of late nineteenth-century Viennese women) that drives him to the point of idiocy, he pushes onwards without knowing what

the fuck he's doing. Freud is a thinker of astounding richness and fertile complexity, but I shall merely touch upon his most disastrous confusion. When he writes on art, degenerating— despite his wealth of acuity—into banal psycho-biography, a terribly damaging loss of direction afflicts the psychoanalytic enterprise. The inherent connection between the irruptive primary process and artistic creativity, or the basis inextricability of psychoanalysis and aesthetics, slips Freud's grasp, and art is presented as a merely contingent terrain for the application of therapeutically honed concepts. The adaptation of the mutilated individual to its society, in which art is illegal except as a parasite of elite commodity production circuits, is the scandal of psychoanalysis. It becomes Kantian (bourgeois); a delicate police activity dedicated to the social management and containment of genius. As if 'therapy' could be anything other than the revolutionary unleashing of artistic creation!

The two basis directions in which the philosophy of genius can develop are exemplified by psychoanalysis and national socialism. Either rigorous anti-anthropomorphism, the steady constriction of the terrain of intentional explanation, and the rolling reduction of praxes to parapraxes, or the re-ascription of genius to intentional individuality, concentration of decision, and the paranoiac praxial interpretation of non-intentional processes (the Jewish conspiracy theory). The death of God is operative in both cases, either as the space of the generative unconscious, or as that of a triumphantly divinized and arbitrarily isolated secular subjectivity. It is easy to see that the role of discourse in these two cases is a very precise register for the difference at issue; on the one hand the talking cure, in which the texts of confession and rational theory are both displaced by the compression wave of a radically senseless energy process that defies the status of object in relation to an autonomously determinable agent language, and on the other, the interminable authoritative monologue of the dictator (politically instantiated ego-ideal), in which the will is returned to a quasi-Kantian acceptation to capitalize upon its libidinal detour, finding its true sense in the lucid decision of an individual who speaks on behalf of a racially specified unconscious clamour.

That part of twentieth-century philosophy resonant with the aesthetically oriented tendency outlined here has as its two great tasks the diagnosis of Nazism and the protraction of the psychoanalytic impulse, in other words the arming of desire with intellectual weapons that will allow it to evade the dead-end racist *Götterdämmerung* politics which capital deploys as a last ditch defence against the flood.

No revolution without insurrectionary desire, no effective route for insurrectionary desire without integral anti-fascism. Wilhelm Reich, Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari are perhaps the most important theoretical *loci* in this development. The latter three I shall say a little about.

It is not *simply* ridiculous to describe Bataille as Schopenhauer with enthusiasm, in so far as this might crudely characterize a certain variant of 'Nietzscheanism', or Dionysian pessimism. After all, Bataille too is concerned with value as the annihilation of life, challenging the utilitarianism that finds its only end in the preservation and expansion of existence. If this affirmation of loss is 'nihilistic', it is at least an 'active nihilism'; the promotion of a violently convulsive *expenditure* rather than a weary renunciation. Art as the wastage of life. And Bataille's involvement with art, above all with literature, is of an unparalleled intricacy and intensity. Philosopher and historian of art, literary theorist, in his 'philosophy' a stylist, dazzling as an essayist, a novelist and poet of both profundity and incandescent beauty, his is a writing oblivious to circumscription, spreading like an exotic fungus into the darkest recesses of aesthetic possibility. A rather tortured and incoherent leap? Come on now! A 'philosophy' of excess that draws out an inner connection between literature, eroticism, and revolt could hardly be irrelevant to our problematic here. As Bataille states, 'beauty alone…renders tolerable a need for disorder, violence, and indignity that is the root of love.'[26]

Bataille also has the peculiar honour, shared with Nietzsche and Reich, of beginning his assault on germinal national socialism before Hitler had exhibited its truth. His early essays sketch a vision of fascism as the most fanatical project for the elimination of excess, an attempt at the secular enforcement of the perfectly ordered city of God against the disorder, luxuriance, and mess of surplus production, as it sprawls into the voluptuary expenditure of eroticism and art. Assailing the fascist tendency is the disindividualized delirium of tragic sacrifice and revolution, when

> Being is given to us in an *intolerable* surpassing of being, no less intolerable than death. And because, in death, it is withdrawn from us at the same time it is given, we must search for it in the *feeling* of death, in those intolerable moments where it seems that we are dying, because the being in us is only there through excess, when the plenitude of horror and that of joy coincide.[27]

For there is no doubt that the fascists are right, the very incarnation of right, yes: 'Literature is even, like the transgression of moral law, a danger.'[28]

A theory of the real as art (primary production) that is melded seamlessly with an anti-fascist diagnostics characterizes the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In their *Antioedipus* they indicate that the rational regulation or coding of creative process is derivative, sterile, and eliminable. Their name for genius is 'schizophrenia', a term that cannot be safely domesticated within psychology, any more than 'genius' can (and for the same reasons). If nature is psychotic it is simply because our psychoses are not in reality 'ours'.

Libido—as the raw energy of creation—is ungrounded, irreducibly multiple, yet it precipitates a real and unified 'principle' out of itself. The body without organs is its name; at once material abstraction, and the concretely hypostasized differential terrain which is nothing other than what is instantaneously shared by difference. The body without organs is pure surface, because it is the mere coherence of differential web, but it is also the source of depth, since it is the sole 'ontological' element of difference. It is produced transcendence. Paradox after paradox, spun like a disintegrating bandage upon the infected and deteriorating wound of Kant's aesthetics, teasing the philosophical domestication of art— the most gangrenous cultural appendage of capital—towards its utter disintegration.

How does desire come to desire its own repression? How does production come to rigidify itself in the social straitjacket *whose most dissolved form is capital*? It is with this problematic, inherited from Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Reich, that Deleuze and Guattari orient their work. In our terms here: how does art become (under-) compensated labour? Their answer involves a displacement of the problem into a philosophical affinity with Kant's paralogisms of the pure understanding, rethought in *Antioedipus* as materially instantiated traps for desire. A paralogism is the attempt to ground 'conditions of possibility' in the objectivity they permit, or creativity in what it creates. This is, to take the most pertinent example, to derive the forces of production from the socio-economic apparatus they generate. Sociological fundamentalism, state worship, totalitarian paranoia and fascism, they all exhibit the same basic impulse; hatred of art, (real) freedom, desire, everything that cannot be controlled, regulated, and administered. Fascism hates aliens, migrant workers, the homeless, rootless people of every kind and inclination, everything evocative of

excitement and uncertainty, women, artists, lunatics, drifting sexual drives, liquids, impurity, and abandonment.

Philosophy, in its longing to rationalize, formalize, define, delimit, to terminate enigma and uncertainty, to co-operate wholeheartedly with the police, is nihilistic in the ultimate sense that it strives for the immobile perfection of death. But creativity cannot be brought to an end that is compatible with power, for unless life is extinguished, control must inevitably break down. We possess *art* lest *we perish of the truth*.[29]

To conclude is not merely erroneous, but ugly.

NOTES

Where both original texts and translation are given I have sometimes translated directly from the original, and sometimes cited the English version without modification.

1 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft,* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1974, 16.
2 Ibid., 22.
3 Ibid., 23.
4 Ibid., 30.
5 Ibid., 189–90 (*The Critique of Judgement,* trans. James Creed Meredith, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982, 115).
6 Ibid., 294–9 (English, 221–5).
7 Ibid., 244 (English, 170).
8 Ibid., 79 (English, 9).
9 Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille and Vorstellung II, ii,* Diogenes, 1977, 446 (*The World as Will and Representation,* vol. II, trans. E.F.J.Payne, New York, Dover, 1966, 377).
10 Ibid., 484 (English, 410).
11 Of all the complex issues I have skimmed over recklessly this is perhaps the richest and most impacted. Schopenhauer, by referring exorbitant form back to a Platonic *eidos* is undoubtedly sacrificing a great deal of the fertile tension in Kant's thought of purposiveness without purpose, although he also reduces the risk of a slide back into teleological theology. The thought that was perhaps necessary in order to depart most radically from the possibility of theistic relapse was that of a divine unconscious, eliminating all possibility of agentic creation at any level. But this would be the image of a mad god. Dionysus?
12 Ibid., 624 (English, 555).
13 Ibid., 650–1 (English, 555).
1 4 Ibid., 630 (English, 538).
15 Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena II, ii,* Diogenes, 1977, 671 (*Parerga and Paralipomena,* vol. II, trans. E.F.J.Payne, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974, 617).
16 Ibid., 673 (English, 619).

17 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II, ii,* 559 (*The World as Will and Representation,* vol. II, 477).
18 Walter F.Otto, *Dionysos, Mythos und Kultus,* Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1933, 74–5.
19 Ibid., 132.
20 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie,* Frankfurt am Main, Ullstein Materialien, 1981, 35 (*The Birth of Tragedy,* trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1967, 47).
21 Ibid., 89 (English, 100).
22 Friedrich Nietzsche, selected and edited by Peter Gast and Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht,* Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1964, 533 (*The Will to Power,* trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1968, 419).
23 Ibid., 413 (English, 326).
24 Ibid., 330 (English, 262).
25 Ibid., 553 (English, 434).
26 Georges Bataille, *Oeuvres Complètes,* Paris, Gallimard, 1976, III, 13.
27 Ibid., 11–12.
28 Ibid., IX, 182.
29 *Der Wille zur Macht,* 554 (English, 435).